

Bob Inzer

CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT AND COUNTY COURTS
LEON COUNTY ♦ TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA

Attachment # 5 **RECEIVED SEP 09 2004**
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SEP 20 2004

September 8, 2004

Mr. Parwez Alam, County Administrator
Leon County Commission
301 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Dear P.A.:

Let me begin by reiterating the remarks I made at the Bank of America (BOA) space meeting on Monday, August 30. The County is moving in the right direction and the proposed plan is far superior to the previous plans that have been presented. I do not want my concerns to be misinterpreted as not being supportive of the general directions. I am in full support and believe the citizens of Leon County will receive improved services from these changes. Unfortunately, I continue to have some concerns and do not want to surprise you or staff with my concerns at our meeting on September 10, and am therefore providing them in advance.

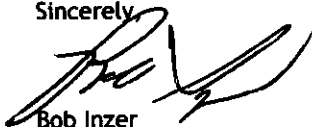
1. I appreciate that staff and the architect are now recommending that all my court staff be co-located on the ground floor of the Courthouse. I believe this is the appropriate location and, with few exceptions, where court staff is found in all other counties. My concern is that the current recommendation requires that we accept the space with minimal modifications. This is a permanent move, not a temporary move, and not retrofitting the space to meet our long-term needs is not acceptable. I am willing to work with the architects on a space plan that minimizes the changes, but believe that to be significantly more than currently budgeted. Most of our court employees have cubicles and work in an open office environment. The existing space is set up for traditional furniture in mostly private offices. Working around fixed walls will result in an inefficient use of personnel and space (thus requiring more space). Most of our existing cubicles are in good shape and I am recommending continued use of them. Again, I am requesting that the plans provide for reconstruction of the space on the first floor.
2. The plans provide for moving all non-court-related personnel off of the northern portion of the first floor of the courthouse; this space would be used for the Traffic, Small Claims, Circuit Civil, Probate, Court Services, Appeals, and Felony divisions that are currently located on the 2nd floor of the courthouse and the Thomasville Road facility. The Official Records (OR) Division, Archives and public viewing would be relocated to the first floor of the BOA Annex. This is a good decision and one that I support. Unfortunately, our Clerk Information Systems (CIS) offices also are located on the first floor of the courthouse and no space has been identified to meet those needs. CIS needs about 1,200 to 1,500 feet in the BOA annex.

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3. The Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) is currently planned to move into the same space in the annex as OR, public viewing and Archives. The space allocated in the BOA annex is approximately the same amount of space as we have on the first floor. The GAL space on the 3rd floor is almost the same amount of space. Existing space for these two functions is approximately 5,500 square feet. The existing proposal is that these be relocated into 3,000 square feet. This will not work. These two functions need to be separated and additional space found.
4. The plan calls for providing additional space in the basement of the BOA Annex for storage of Clerk records. I support this direction. For the most part this is not replacement space for files currently housed and maintained in the courthouse. The county currently pays for space in a metal sheet roof storage building on Capital Circle, which is our off-site records storage facility. It does not meet state standards for the storage of permanent records. It is our intent to move as many of the records as possible out of this facility and into the BOA annex basement. Some of the records that are scheduled to be moved to long-term storage would be moved to the basement. But this is to make room for the next year's records in the courts. This past weekend, as I watched the weather from Hurricane Frances, I am reminded how vulnerable these permanent records are and the need to find a more secure location as soon as possible.
5. While not a specific part of this plan, I want to mention a related activity that is associated with these moves. During all of my discussions of relocating the Thomasville Road activities into the courthouse, I have consistently held that the traffic citation payment function should not be moved into the courthouse. I believe that this should be co-located with other county functions in an easily accessible storefront location. Well over a year ago, I had preliminary discussions with the Tax Collector's Office about excess space they had in Carriage Gate that we could use for this activity. Much time has passed since then and I do not know if this space is still available or if the current willingness to share space still exists. It is possible that, depending upon availability, space will need to be rented for this activity. Given the level of activity this generates, I continue to believe that the County does not want to have this function located in the courthouse.
6. A question arose with respect to moving marriage and passports from the courthouse. At this time, I am assuming that they will continue in their current location. At some time in the future, this may change, but I am under the impression that they will continue in their current location for now.

I appreciate your willingness to work with me and the other participants in the space planning process. This is extremely important and we need to get it right the first time. If we don't, we will pay both in the quality of services we provide and in the subsequent cost to retrofit. If you have any questions related to these issues, please let me know.

Sincerely,



Bob Inzer
Clerk of the Circuit Court

BI/cam

cc: The Honorable Jane Sauls, Leon County Commission Chair
The Honorable Tony Grippa, Leon County Commissioner
The Honorable Bill Proctor, Leon County Commissioner
The Honorable Bob Rackleff, Leon County Commissioner
The Honorable Rudy Maloy, Leon County Commissioner
The Honorable Dan Winchester, Leon County Commissioner
The Honorable Cliff Thael, Leon County Commissioner
The Honorable Charles Francis, Chief Judge, 2nd Judicial Circuit
Dean Leboeuf, Esq., Tallahassee Bar